

BUREAU DE L'ÉDUCATION FRANÇAISE



**Éducation
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THE POLICY FOR
BASIC FRENCH

Revised 1990

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The Policy for Basic French in Manitoba
became official in June 1983.

INTRODUCTION

In the 70's, the profusion and diversity of approaches to the study of non-immersion French as a second language in Manitoba had made it difficult at the provincial level to define clear guidelines, to prepare suitable instructional material and to ensure satisfactory results. A restructuring of the whole program was needed to eliminate this undue multiplicity of options and to provide a coherent and continuous course of studies. The Policy for Basic French which was announced in 1983 set out a comprehensive and realistic approach to assist provincial and educational authorities in providing programs aimed at well-defined and attainable goals.

The Bureau de l'éducation française Division of the Department of Education and Training has since the 1980 restructured non-immersion French second language programs offered in the province of Manitoba. The coherent approach to the teaching of the Basic French has entry points at Grades 4 and 7. Two different programs, specifically the Basic French Nine-Year Program and the Basic French Six-Year Program have been created. Opportunity for K-3 French instruction has been provided by an "Exposure Package", while a Basic French Three-Year Re-Entry option at the 10-12 level makes possible a return for those who have discontinued their study of French at an earlier stage.

The Basic French Nine-Year Program and the Basic French Six-Year Program provide daily instruction totalling 200 minutes per week or 240 minutes per 6-day cycle (40 minutes daily being recommended with no less than 30 minutes per period). This results in 120 hours of instruction per year for the total sequence of the program selected by the student (9 years from Grade 4 to Grade 12; 6 years from Grade 7 to Grade 12). The two programs are delineated by a curriculum guide which describes the specific objectives and the content for each program.

With the introduction of the Basic French programs, the terms Conversational French and Core French have been abandoned. These terms have been and continue to be a source of confusion, particularly with one of these designations being a misnomer. The terms Basic French Nine-Year Program, Basic French Six-Year Program, and Basic French Three-Year Re-Entry Stream which replace the old terminology, are self-explanatory.

Generally, the Basic French Nine-Year Program, having the greater time allotment and, therefore, the more ambitious goals, will currently lead into the double zero (00) sequence at the high school level. Ideally, students should continue with their initial program selection so that they may reap the maximum benefit provided by their particular option. It must be understood, however, that the two programs cannot achieve the same objectives: a student with 1080 contact hours of French may be expected to have, in general, a better grasp of the language than a student in the 720-hour program.

The introduction of uniform entry points and continuous programs across the province should not only lead to more positive results in the learning of French as a second language, but should also eliminate the frustration experienced by children who either have to repeat material learned earlier or are faced with work for which they are not prepared. Usually these children drop the French course. A continuous, coherent program for all grade levels should encourage them to pursue the study of French.

The present policy should also simplify administrative procedures and allow school divisions to commit themselves to realistic programs whose objectives and course content are clearly stated. Parents and students, well informed as to the possible outcome of various programs, should be able to make an intelligent choice among the programs offered. Similarly teachers should be more cognizant of the skills required to teach these programs. Teacher-training institutions and other organizations involved in the professional development of teachers should be better able to provide training and upgrading that are clearly focused with respect to the programs.

TIME ALLOTMENTS

For the Basic French programs to meet their objectives, it is essential that daily instruction be provided. Daily contact with the French language reinforces material learned previously. Further, an instructional period of approximately 40 minutes duration will enable the teacher to engage students in meaningful activities. The daily periods of 40 minutes required by the Basic French program (or daily periods of not less than 30 minutes equalling 200 minutes per week, or 240 minutes per 6-day cycle) will allow the students to accumulate the required number of contact hours. The number of contact hours constitutes one of the most important factors in attaining the proposed objectives of the courses.

At the high school level, the credit system already prescribes a time allotment which provides students in credit courses with instruction amounting to 120 hours. In those grades, all French courses will operate within the prescribed time allotment.

BASIC FRENCH NINE-YEAR PROGRAM

This is essentially the Core French Pilot Project begun in 135 schools across the province in the 1980-81 school year. A comprehensive authorized program of studies for Grades 4 to 6 has been available since June 1982. Updates are made yearly to maintain the integrity of the document. As well, the authorized junior high school program of studies grades 7-9 was made available in June 1985. The curriculum guide for the senior high grades 10 to 12 will be authorized in 1990. Three summaries, (grades 4-6, 7-9, 10-12) providing greater details concerning this Program, are available at the Bureau de l'éducation française.

BASIC FRENCH SIX-YEAR PROGRAM

By making Grade 7 an entry point it is possible to create a program of studies geared exclusively to the beginning student. Due to the reduced contact time, the objectives have been revised and are more modest than those set for the Basic French Nine-Year Program. The junior high program of studies has been available since 1988. An interim curriculum document is available for grades 10 to 12; it will be authorized in the near future. Two summaries (grades 7-9 and 10-12) providing greater details concerning the Six Year Program, are available at the Bureau de l'éducation française.

BASIC FRENCH THREE-YEAR RE-ENTRY STREAM

This is essentially the general course currently known as French 101, 201, 301. To date, this course has been geared to beginners and to those preferring a less formal program. In view of the 360 contact hours available, the objectives for this program must be realistic. The present program of studies for this course has been revised and made available since 1988. The revised program proposes a more functional-notional approach to teaching the language (i.e. French for specific situations: travel, shopping, etc.), and focuses on structures and vocabulary necessary to provide a practical language base.

EXPOSURE PACKAGE - PRIMARY LEVEL (K-3)

In areas where parents and students are particularly eager to provide an early start, school divisions will be able to offer an "exposure package" entitled "Pour nos petits manitobains" at the primary level if such is the latter's wish. This option will have a flexible time allotment (approximately 120 hours from Grades 1 to 3) and will start at either the Kindergarten or Grade 1 level. It will predominantly consist of games, songs and activities geared to the children's level of maturity and aimed primarily at developing a positive attitude towards the French language and culture. The "exposure package" presently available through the Manitoba Textbook Bureau at a minimal fee, is an autonomous and separate entity. The children who have completed this optional package will still enter the regular program at the Grade 4 level.

ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATIONS

Curriculum development is the responsibility of the province. Greater coordination at the provincial level will enhance the use of approved instructional materials at the appropriate level and in the proper sequence. The Bureau de l'éducation française Division, in collaboration with various teacher committees, will assume a leadership role in this regard. Curriculum implementation is a shared responsibility of the provincial and local levels of administration. School divisions are asked to consider the development of a hiring policy to ensure that new teachers are competent in the French language and knowledgeable about methods of teaching French as a second language.

Schools offering one or more of the new Basic French programs should provide a locale where a teacher can create a French atmosphere and can have ready access to the great variety of teaching aids and materials which make the new Basic French program an active experience for the students rather than a lecture by the teacher. It should be noted that although a special classroom is not absolutely essential, a French atmosphere is more easily created when the teacher is not required to move from room to room.

FUNDING

I. The Basic French Program:

The grant consists of \$100 per full-time equivalency (F.T.E.) for a properly implemented Basic French 9-Year or 6-Year Program. A full-time equivalency is the product of the percentage of instruction time in French and the number of students in a given grade. At the maximum, 40 minutes of French instruction in a 300-minute school day will be recognized. This represents 13.3%.

Example: i) a class of 20 students in the Basic French 9-Year or 6-Year Program with a percentage of French of 13.3% would qualify for a grant totalling: $20 \times .133 \times \$100 = \$266.00$

If the percentage of instruction in French should drop below 11.5 (or 34.5 minutes in a 300-minute school day), the funding falls to \$50 per F.T.E.

Example: ii) a class of 20 students in the Basic French 9-Year or 6-Year Program with a percentage of French of 10.5% would qualify for a grant totalling: $20 \times .105 \times \$50 = \$105.00$

II. The "Exposure Package" and the "Re-Entry Program":

For the "Exposure Package" and the "Re-Entry Program", funding consists of \$50 per Full-time equivalency.

Examples: i) a class of 20 students following the "Exposure Package" with a percentage of French of 6.5% would qualify for a grant totalling: $20 \times .065 \times \$50 = \$65.00$

ii) a class of 20 students in the "Re-Entry Program" with a percentage of French of 12.5% would qualify for a grant totalling: $20 \times .125 \times \$50 = \$125.00$

III. The Conversational French Program:

For an interim period, i.e. until most school divisions/districts have had the opportunity to fully implement the Basic French Program, the Department will continue to fund this program at \$50 per F.T.E.

Example: a class of 20 students in the older Conversational French Program with a percentage of French of 12.0% would qualify for a grant totalling: $20 \times .120 \times \$50 = \$120.00$

IV. Summary and other details:

As shown in each case, the calculation of grants for these French programs is based on the number of pupils enrolled and their corresponding percentage of instruction time in French. This data is gathered for each school involved, by type of program and grade as of September 30th (or the last working day of September) of each year. The form used to do so is entitled "**Manitoba-French Second Language Programmes (Other Than French Immersion) September 30, 19__.**"

The data is verified and compiled by the Bureau de l'éducation française. Grants are thus calculated for each school. This information is forwarded to division/district offices to apprise them of the grant amount and to enable them to verify the results. These grants are then included as part of the operating advances paid monthly to the school divisions/districts by the Schools' Finance Branch.

Approximately a month after sending the enrollment and grant data, the Bureau de l'éducation française forwards a proposed budget form on which school divisions or districts indicate their projected expenditures for the Basic French Program only. Once again, it should be noted that the grants received are intended to cover only some of the additional costs and not the total costs of these French programs. This budget form must be completed as instructed and returned to the Bureau de l'éducation française by a specified date. Failure to do so may jeopardize the division's or district's grants for the following year.

If you should have any further questions or should you require further information with respect to grants and procedures, please contact Marcel Bilodeau at the Bureau de l'éducation française (945-6916 or toll free 1-800-282-8069).

SUMMARY

The policy which has been described in this paper sets out clear guidelines for improving the teaching of Basic French in Manitoba. Only with continued efforts and cooperation on the part of all interested parties will these French as a second language programs thrive. Students, parents, teachers and administrators must take up the challenge.